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İNGİLİZ VE HİNT BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*

Özet

Sömürgeciliğin dünya tarihinin gelişmesinde önemli bir yeri vardır. Bu sürecin etkileri günümüzde halen canlılığını korumaktadır. Politik, sosyal ve kültürel yankılarıyla birlikte sömürgeciliğin edebiyat üzerinde de derin etkileri bulunmaktadır. Günümüzde bu süreci takip eden edebiyat iki başlık altında yorumlanır. Bunlar; kolonyal ve postkolonyal dönemlerdir. *A Passage to India* kolonyal edebiyat akımı içinde ele alınır. Kolonyal sürecin genel çerçevesini çizebilmek için *A Passage to India* önemli veriler sağlamaktadır. Bu yapıtta üzerinde durulan tema, mesaj ve içerik sürecin doğru değerlendirilmesinde yapıtın bir mihenk taşı olmasını sağlar. *A Passage to India* sürece her iki açıdan bakma şansını vermektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı bu yapıt çerçevesinde sürece sömüren ve sömürülen bakış açısıyla yaklaşmaktır. *A Passage to India,* kolonyal edebiyat yapıtları arasında sömürülen insana olumlu yaklaşan öncü bir nitelik taşır. Okuyucuya sömürülen bireyle kendini özdeşleştirme fırsatı vererek onları daha iyi anlamayı sağlar. Çünkü Forster olaylar sadece sömürücü gücün gözüyle değil, sömürülenin gözüyle de bakmaya çalışır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Britanya, Hindistan, Sömürgecilik, İstismar, Edebiyat, Bakış açısı.

FROM BRITISH AND INDIAN PERSPECTIVE; *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*

Abstract

Colonialism has an important effect in the whole world history. The impacts of this period are still vivacious. In addition to social, political, cultural repercussions colonialism has also a profound reflection on literature. Today the literature ensued by this period is interpreted under two headings. They are the colonial and the postcolonial literatures. *A Passage to India* joins the group of colonial literature. *A Passage to India* provides valuable source data to obtain an understanding of the general atmosphere of colonization period in India. The themes, messages and contents implicated in this novel make it as a touchstone

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for a straight assessment of that period. Generally the prospect of colonization is regarded from one perspective. *A Passage to India* gives a chance to perceive the process from both sides. The concern of this study is to thrust the incidents and themes from two perspectives to the forefront.

Key words: Britain, India, Colonization, Exploitation, Literature, Perspective.

Introduction

Colonialism has affected the world socially, culturally and commercially for centuries. The impacts of this period are still vivacious even today. In addition to social, political, cultural repercussions colonialism has also a profound reflection on literature. Today the literature ensued by this period is interpreted under two headings. E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* joins the group of colonial literature. The Great Britain has been the most influential colonizer, and India has always been a place of attraction. A work that focuses on these two countries provides the essential view to understand the colonization process. In this respect *A Passage to India* may give sufficient source to obtain an understanding of the general atmosphere. The themes, messages and contents implicated in this novel make it as a touchstone for a straight assessment of that period.

Colonization implemented a very broad area of study in literature. The colonization process effected many parts of the world substantially. Generally the prospect is regarded from one perspective. The colonial literature generally highlights the process from colonizers' point of view. And the postcolonial literature's main concern consists of problems of colonized. *A Passage to India* gives a chance to perceive the process from both sides. Hemenway claims that the reputation of this novel hinges largely on its supposed accuracy as an imaginative handling of a mysterious land where East-West encounters have been most dramatically and poignantly enacted (Hemenway, 1972: 74). The concern of this study is to thrust the incidents and themes from two perspectives to the forefront. It can be suggested that among colonial literary works, *A Passage to India is* prominent to secure a sympathetic touch to colonized society. It gives a chance to reader to empathize with the ruled nation and as a result understand them. Forster does not look at the incidents from one perspective; he depicts the scene from colonized nation's perspective as well.

Discussion

Forster submits a number of characters to conjure up a gleam perception of colonization state of India. Among all English characters just a few can be defined as decent. Forster's critical approach to English characters is praiseworthy. Likewise the depiction of reputable Indian characters is also outstanding. However the most estimable feature of novel is implication of libertarian elements that will be discussed further in this study. Fielding, Adela and Mrs. Moore are the favourable characters that play a vital role in progress of the story on British side. The main character to be handled on the Indian side is Dr. Aziz. Forster does not just focus on a character. Many characters are at the centre of the novel and it gives a chance to evaluate the situations from many perspectives. The notions and events are entailed to be rated from perspectives of both nations. The superiority of ruling class is certain but it comes in sight even in case of defective acts. "When we poor blacks take bribes, we perform what we are bribed to perform, and the law discovers us in consequence. The English take and do nothing. I

admire them" (Forster, 2005: 10). Aziz' admiration to such a corrupt action does not embody a genuine quality; it just implies cynicism to show British injustice.

British existence has permeated in every phase of Indian life and the evil acts of them have a contagious quality. An average person in England becomes a brute when he or she stays in India after a certain time. Aziz gives two years for any Englishman and six months for any Englishwoman (Forster, 2005: 9). Eventually they will lose their innocence and become merciless to natives. Levine claims that Forster virtually designs every emendation to make British appear less sympathetic (Levine, 1970: 290). It is striking female characters mutate in a brute personality in a shorter time. The outrageous and conceited women characters of the novel support this claim. The hostile characteristic of English women engenders a common dislike towards them among Indians. As a literate native, Aziz, also considers all Englishwomen as haughty and venal (Forster, 2005: 11). Being an Indian gentleman is inefficacious to be regarded by the ruling class. Hawkins states that the chief argument against imperialism in *A Passage to India* is that it prevents personal relationships (Hawkins, 1983: 54). Friendship with Indians is out of question for the majority of the ruling class. An Englishman or woman can bother any Indian merely to show his or her power. Through all novel a thoroughly ignorance of Indians leaps out. British build two completely different worlds and there is no place for Indians in their world. They do not tolerate a servant to see even an acting European woman on the scene. However; such misconducts gradually generate a reaction in Indian's consciousness.

The ongoing depreciative atmosphere is ceased by Mrs. Moore's appearance. Aziz encounters her at the mosque and his harsh approach is modulated by Mrs. Moore's courtesy. Criticizing the British is an insecure attitude for an Indian. However; Mrs. Moore's trustworthy disposition inclines Aziz to reveal his outbreak. Meeting such an out of type Englishwoman produces a gleam of hope and he feels that he owns the land as much as anyone does. No matter how kind is Mrs. Moore, she will not be able to invite Aziz to club of whites. The British seek to constitute a small England in India. Because being in India is a kind of exile for them. The existence of Indians in their world will ruin their community. In this respect the communication and contact with natives are discouraged (Forster, 2005: 23). But they are not well aware of the fact that the severe discrimination aggrandizes the abyss between two nations.

The repulsion against natives sometimes crosses the borders of chauvinism. Mrs. Callendar claims that; "The kindest thing one can do a native is to let him die" (Forster, 2005: 24). More than that; she rejects association with natives even in heaven. Among all female characters there are just two, Mrs. Moore and Adela, who side with natives. The social intercourse with even virtues Indians is ignored. That's why a party to bridge the gulf between East and West only makes contribution to humiliation of Indians. The spiritual subversion of newcomers is not an unexpected situation. However; as an extraordinary character Mrs. Moore is distinguished from the rest. She embraces the people and the nature of India sincerely. She narrates her encounter with Aziz to her son, Ronny. He is offended because she does not indicate by the tone of her voice that she is talking about an Indian (Forster, 2005: 27). Ronny regrets about his mother's respect to Indian's religion. Adela declares his inconsistency because if he expects respect to his religion he should be respectful to other's religion. Forster depicts the unsatisfied chauvinist character, Ronny, as an inconsistent person to prove the irrationality of his ideas. On the other hand Forster deems Adela worthy of the logical thinking. Forster's approach to Indians is also justly.

The Nawab Bahadur was a big proprietor and a philanthropist, a man of benevolence and decision. His character among all the communities in the province stood high. He was a straightforward enemy and a staunch friend, and his hospitality was proverbial. "Give, do not lend; after death who will thank you?" was his favourite remark. He held it a disgrace to die rich. (Forster, 2005: 33)

There is not a single British who is depicted with such qualities in the *A Passage to India*. The colonization is based on the capitalist exploitation. The philosophy of system depends on rapacity. The characteristic qualities of Nawab Bahadur are completely in contradiction with the philosophy of colonization. In this context the glorification of Nawab is in fact the degradation of the colonization.

British behavioural perspective causes disapproval in Indians. Actually some of the British take notice on this fact. Ronny suggests that the old generation used to cringe but the younger generation believe in a show of manly independence (Forster, 2005: 29). That's why education is determined as an undesired approach for Indians because it has a dangerous potential. The educated Indians would question correctness of the colonial system. After all Ronny still believes that the proper treatment of natives is just a matter of nonsense. Ronny used to be a humanist at England. But in India he believes the superiority of his race. In India the highest level of caste system is Brahman caste. But the caste of English is higher than the Brahman class. In whole India just the queen can be approved to be equal to an ordinary British (Forster, 2005: 38). British existence in India is based on conflicts. They are alleged to bring justice and to keep peace in India. In reality they are the cause of injustice and chaos. Forster sarcastically points out Ronny's work as protecting the weak against the less weak, the incoherent against the plausible. Ronny is surrounded by lies and flattery (Forster, 2005: 46). The undignified Indians are the flatterers who also should be blamed for contributing the decay of British system in India. Mrs. Moore has detected a solution to the colonial corruption. She believes that; "One touch of regret--not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart--would have made him a different man, and the British Empire a different institution" (Forster, 2005: 46). Unlike Ronny, she claims that the reason of British existence in India must be kindness. From Indian perspective, Aziz shares the same idea.

Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need, we do not even realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. We do not forget, though we may seem to. Kindness, more kindness, and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope. (Forster, 2005: 107)

Aziz persistently stresses the notion of kindness. It is important that the open-minded English and Indian agree on the same concept. However; British are far away from granting Indians such a grace. Indians are very willing to make a civilized connection with British. An invitation from British to a party is responded on the highest degree by the Indians. But they are only treated as undesired creatures at the party. However; some Indians still take it as a blessing to be invited to a party. And such Indians do not care much about being steered up by British.

Another extraordinary British character is Mr. Fielding. He is the principal of a little college at Chandrapore and he does not mind whom he teaches, he has no objection to add Indian children to student list of the school (Forster, 2005: 56). One of the universal rights, education, is represented as a blessing to Indians students. Mr. Fielding has no racial feeling, white is just a colour. In fact he is not unpatriotic and his closest friends are English in England.

He believes he can make friendship with Indians like his friends in England. Mr. Fielding's approach is very humanist when considering the circumstances of that time. But in today's conditions he has done just what he was supposed to do. However; his ideas are considered as fatal for English caste in India. The Englishwomen do not dignify him as a real sahib. That's why he is being disliked by the English women community. In this respect Englishwomen are more brutal than the Englishmen. But Mr. Fielding seems very unconcerned about their feelings and thoughts. It is possible to keep in with Indians and Englishmen, but if he wishes to keep in with Englishwomen he must drop the Indians. Under these conditions it is impossible to combine the two parties and he finds it convenient and pleasant to associate with Indians (Forster, 2005: 57). Fielding fails to fulfil the expectations of the British society, that's why he becomes almost an outcast. Mr. Fielding's tolerant approach encourages Aziz to define his thoughts freely. Aziz quests the existence of England in India. He states that the discontented Englishmen have no excuse to stay in India (Forster, 2005: 102). As Spencer points out the Anglo-Indians complain repeatedly about the muddle which encloses their lives (Spencer, 1968: 287). On the other hand Indians are also discontented to host English. This undesired association is a common idea and maintaining such an association becomes meaningless.

The British colonial system is in fact a system based on fear. The surrender, the non-resistance and the unconditional obedience of Indians mainly depends on the fear situated in the hearts and minds of them. Adela states that what they hear at the club is just ridiculous gossip. This tiny criticism finds no response by the Indian professor. "The old man was silent, perhaps feeling that it was unseemly of her to criticize her race, perhaps fearing that if he agreed she would report him for disloyalty" (Forster, 2005: 68). The fear avoids him to confirm a very small issue which seems against the ruling class. The fear is more profound in the older generation. Aziz comes from the younger generation and sees no harm in confirming Adela's idea about English. The implication of the same fear can be observed in the British as well. Although they are the ruling class, the main reason behind their brutality is their fear of Indians. Adela is alleged to be insulted in one of the Marabar caves. This allegation causes indignation in British society; mostly in women. The Englishwomen are in a great terror because they believe the same thing can come over to them as well. Whether the interrogation is done properly or not the suspect, Aziz, should be punished as soon as possible. Adela becomes a victim who receives sympathy from Englishwomen. She becomes the proof of menace of Indians. The insult justifies the maltreatment to Indians. When Adela retracts her charges she meets with the severe reaction of British society. She confesses the truth at the risk of losing her face. She is considered as a traitor by British. Ronny finds marriage with her as a peril to his future career and she finds no place to stay in India. Mrs. Moore's existence in India is also a perilous state for she rejects to witness against Aziz. British society is very motivated to eliminate any risk against their existence.

The incident in the cave and the judgement process change the atmosphere completely against the ruling class. Aziz' exoneration becomes an achievement of Indian society and it is celebrated by all classes. Levine suggests that in the novel the character is not overwhelmed, the story ends in an uneasy stand off; this makes *A Passage to India* Forster's greatest novel. Indian Aziz, who has been the victim of British racism, is vindicated, and he and the Englishman Fielding recognize that private relations suffer in a world of imperialist domination (Levine, 1984; 81). The British existence becomes a matter of question. After Aziz' trial Muslims and Hindus get closer. Aziz vows to be friendly with Hindus and to hate British.

British attitude unavoidably cause an intimacy between these two classes. Aziz finally feels like a true Indian through his hatred to English. He declares his national ideas to Mr Fielding; "India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India!" (Forster, 2005: 306). Just the true Indians have the right to stay in India the rest should leave. Parry states that the novel alludes the growth of an Indian nationalism (Parry, 1998: 178). The different classes in India may have conflicts among each other, but the most undesired nation is English. English are unwilling to embrace the east. The social intimation between English and Indian is considered as a disaster by them. In this respect Aziz refuses to become friends with Mr. Fielding unless they become even. They can become even only after the British leave India. The problem of sense of belonging is observed in most of the British. Although they rule the natives, they are well aware of the fact that they do not belong to the place. The feeling of being the intruder is observed in the sensitive characters of the novel.

Conclusion

The long lived British rule is based on the fragmented structure of India. The caste system and different religious groups are the barriers for the formation of a coherent structure. That's why Indians do not show a strong resistance to an outsider ruling class that provides unity among them. However; when the ruling class' injustice becomes unbearable the resistance begins to arise gradually. There are massive differences between the two cultures. Suleri claims that *A Passage to India* stages a secret attack on difference (Suleri, 1987: 108). Actually the attack is not done secretly; it is quite clear at all parts of the novel. Britain is the intruder, Indian is the land owner. The owner becomes servant and the intruder becomes master. Britain is symbol of modernism in technology, education and social life. India symbolizes the primitive way of life. That's why British adopted the role of teacher and casted the role of student to India. But India is the naughty student that needs to be educated and it can be done in any way even in a forcible way. In this respect what Britain do, should not be interrogated by natives. Because what she does is for the sake of India. A stronger claim would suggest the devotion of Britain in respect to abnegation to bring civilization to a land which is very far off to Europe. Such a claim would only intend to cover the bad sides of colonization. Britain's population and land are smaller than India; the ruling of smaller over the bigger is a sarcastic point. When the overall view is scrutinized carefully the massive gap between two nations is immense. In physics the opposite poles attract each other. But it does not work in case of colonization. On the contrary the opposite poles push one another which can be observed in liberation struggles of colonized nations.

It is a fact that there are libertarian elements in *A Passage to India*. However; it should also be kept in mind that a public declaration against the colonialism could be determined as a treachery at that time. In this concept Forster's state should be determined as a brave outburst. Unlike his contemporaries he depicts the exploitation clearly. He does not ignore the injustice. During the colonization period Indians could not find chance to express their ideas about colonization. Somehow Forster becomes their spokesman. Allen states that it is characteristic of Forster to portray incidents from two points of view (Allen, 1955: 947). In this respect Forster depicts the story from both English and Indian points of view. When fulfilling this mission he pushes the limits within the potentials of the time. Otherwise crossing the line would be determined as treachery. Indians have found the chance to put into words their ideas only after the colonization period was over. Colonization causes an interaction between completely

different cultures. Colonial literature mostly represents the literature produced by the members of the ruling class during the process of colonialism. Britain formed the lifestyle of India. When give and take between two countries is compared, Britain has taken natural sources of India and India has only taken the culture of England. This bidirectional movement has not occurred willingly for both sides. What India has taken is result of imposing. It is hard to claim that the colonialism brought all useful aspects to colonized society. Colonizers have exploited many sources of India. The colonization process has provided lots of data for literature. However; the colonial literature falls behind the postcolonial literature. It can be suggested that the only advantage of colonization is that it gave birth to the postcolonial literature. Postcolonial literature is an emancipator literature, it is humanist, and it quests the former era. It gives a chance for the colonized individual to make his point about colonization process. It is more colourful than the previous one. It is polyphonic. It is not limited to a certain area and it is more open-minded. The period of former one is already over. It can be suggested that colonial literature is mainly literature of the ruling nation and the postcolonial literature is mainly the literature of the ruled nation. The writers of the postcolonial literature are still producing substantial works.

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